



Accountability Challenges in the Health System in Nigeria: Dimensions, Impacts and Opportunities



Accountability Challenges in the Health System in Nigeria: Dimensions, Impacts and Opportunities

Anchor

Dr Mohammed Jibril Abdullahi is a Health System and Primary Health Care Specialist, Convener and Chief Executive Officer of Initiative for Health Accountability and Transparency (IHAT), A Health NGO mobilizing for Good Governance and Accountability, Health-Equity and the Publisher of E-Books Technical Series on Health System in Nigeria.



It is our pleasure to welcome our followers to this edition of our E-Book Technical Series on Health System in Nigeria on Accountability Challenges in the Health System in Nigeria: Dimensions, Impacts and Opportunities. This follows our two previous series on Transforming Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage and Systems Thinking for Making Health System Work for All, both of which were very positively received by our followers with valuable feedback.

I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the enormous contribution and commitment of the E-Book Technical Series Desk comprising of Dr. Adeyemi Adedoyin, Miss Monica Oche (desk officer), and Mr. Idris Jibril.

Our final gratitude goes to all our followers for their patronage, and look forward to suggestions on how we can contribute better towards stronger health system in Nigeria.

Editorial Notes

Initiative for Health Accountability and Transparency (IHAT) was founded to be a **STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL VOICE** in the Health System, Promoting Good Governance and Accountability, Better Health-Equity and an end to Social Exclusion.

Lack of accountability in the management of the public sector in Nigeria has remained a critical issue for a long time. Due to poor culture of accountability in the health system, corruption and its tendencies - abuses, frauds and wastes have become endemic.

As a result of commitment to Universal Health Coverage, the government is facing pressure to provide health services effectively, efficiently and equitably through approaches which often converge in emphasizing accountability as a core element in improving health system performance.

Therefore, accountability is becoming increasingly visible on the political agenda and becoming a new frontier for health system improvement and a tool for improving health system performance for better health outcomes.

However, poor accountability has remained a significant constraint to better health in the country. It impedes health system performance, public health programme success and sustainability. And when development assistance for health (DAH) is involved, trust, reputation and integrity of the country suffer significant damage. Equally, the partners may withhold further funding support.

In furtherance of our mission, Initiative for Health Accountability and Transparency has chosen this chronicle on Accountability Challenges in the Health System in Nigeria: Dimensions, Impacts and Opportunities to deepen the understanding of the conceptual and practical foundations of accountability and background issues in accountability failures in the health system.

Content

This E-Book is expounded to facilitate greater understanding of the background issues in different types of accountability and the concept of failed accountability.

It sought to respond to the following eight (8) questions:

- what is accountability?
- why is accountability of concern in the health system?
- what are the dimensions of accountability?
- who are the accountability actors in the health system?
- how do accountability actors relate and interact?
- what are the dimensions and drivers of accountability failure?
- what are the effects of accountability failure in the health system?
- what are the Accountability Enhancing Strategies and Directions?
- what are the roles of the legislature and civil society organizations in accountability in the healthsystem?

The outline include the following topics:

1. Introduction
2. General Concern about Accountability
3. Dimensions of Accountability
4. Role of health sector actors in accountability.
5. Dimensions of Accountability Challenges - Nature and Forms of Abuses, Frauds and Wastes
6. Factors that Fuel Accountability Challenges
7. Impact of Accountability Challenges in the Health System
8. Accountability Enhancing Strategies
9. Mechanisms and Approaches for Combatting Accountability Challenges
10. The Role of the Legislature (States and the National Assembly) in Promoting Political Accountability
11. The Role of the Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Accountability

About Us

Initiative for Health Accountability and Transparency is a Health Non-Governmental Organisation founded to promote good governance and accountability, health equity and mobilize towards ending social exclusion.

We are Accredited by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) as Continuing Professional Development provider on Health Leadership, Management and Governance.

For our courses, visit <http://learn.ihatresources.org>

Website: www.ihatresources.org; Email: ihatnigeria@gmail.com

Twitter: [@ihatnigeria](https://twitter.com/ihatnigeria); Facebook: <https://fb.me/ihatnigeria>

Contact: Suit C310, Garki Mall, Kabo Steet, Damaturu Crescent, Garki 2, Abuja.
Phone: +2349027950751, +2348161342585, +2348072338232

You Can Access all our E-Book PUBLICATIONS at
www.ihatresources.org

Introduction

Globally, good governance has emerged as a high-profile issue and is of critical interest for policy makers, managers and stakeholders in the health sector. Accountability is a fundamental element of good governance system and a key factor for realizing the dream of stronger health system and better health outcomes, and achieving greater health impact.

Governments are facing pressure to provide health services effectively, efficiently and equitably through approaches which often converge in emphasizing accountability as a core element in improving health system performance. Accountability is therefore becoming increasingly visible on the political agenda and a new frontier health system reforms.

In many countries, failed accountability is fueling inappropriate practices in form of fraud, abuses and wastes in the public sector which has continued to be the major issue for the governments. Nigeria, like many other nations, has had a fair share of unethical practices, abuses and financial frauds in the health sector.

Accountability is the obligation of individuals or agencies to provide information about, and/or justification for, their actions to other actors, along with the imposition of sanctions for failure to comply and/or to engage in appropriate action.

It involves measures to ensure that the person or organization with the authority to provide a service actually delivers that service i.e. that providers and policy-makers are answerable for their actions, and to demonstrate that they have delivered. It means being answerable to someone for decisions and actions.

Accountability ranks right at the top with management commitment as a critical ingredient in a health system management. As an aspect of governance, accountability has been central to discussions related to problems in the health system, particularly in public health and healthcare delivery.

Accountability Challenges in the Health System in Nigeria: Dimensions, Impacts and Opportunities

It is an essential governance tool defining relationships, roles and responsibilities pertaining to the actors involved, ensuring that the resources necessary to perform those roles are available and that performance is measured and evaluated. It is one of its key levers for successful performance improvement (George 2003, Brinkerhoff 2004, Hammer et al. 2007, Lewis and Pettersson 2009).

In the absence of accountability, merely allocating public resources for health goods and services may not necessarily lead to desirable health outcomes. Therefore, improving accountability is an essential element in improving health system performance.

There are several common principles on which accountability is based:

1. In health services delivery, accountability is predicated on relationships between the ones making the decisions and those affected by them. (Ebrahim 2003, Fooks and Maslove 2004, Maybin et al. 2011).
2. A set of goals or objectives must be defined including clear explanation of roles and responsibilities of each party in achieving the goals. (Denis 2014).
3. The accountability relationship is governed by the ability to measure and monitor if these objectives or goals are being met. (Denis 2014, Morris and Zelmer 2005, Smith, Mossialos and Papanicolas 2008).

Failure to meet the goals and objectives will trigger consequences such as formal or informal sanctioning (e.g. negative publicity). Sanctions without enforcement diminish accountability and undermine the public's confidence in agencies and government (Brinkerhoff 2004, George 2003)

Failed or insufficient accountability often drives health system reform (Brinkerhoff 2004, Deber 2014, Ebrahim 2003, Maybin et al. 2011, and Task Team 2013). Focusing on accountability can increase our understanding of health system operations and lead to better system design (Brinkerhoff 2004).

This E-Book offers a fresh and practical approach to understanding accountability Challenges in the health system in Nigeria, its dimensions, impacts and Opportunities.

To continue reading this feature,

[Click Here For Full Access](#)